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MBBChBAO(Hons), FRACGP, DCH

**CLINIC STAFF**

**Nursing:** Sinead, Karen, Fiona, Roz, Halina and Anna

**Reception:** Ellen, Janet, Virginia, Kirsten, Sue, Julie, Michele, Rachel

**Practice Manager:** Maria

**SURGERY HOURS AND SERVICES**

Consultations are by appointment.

**Monday to Thursday**

8.00am-1pm 2pm-6pm

**Friday**

8.00am-1pm 2pm-5pm

**Saturday**

8.30am-11.30am

**GP After Hours – Mount Lawley**

Ph 9370 4200

Monday to Friday 7pm-11pm

Saturday 2pm-10pm

Sunday and Pub Hols 10am-10pm

For all emergencies please present to St John of God Midland Public Hospital, 1 Clayton St, Midland Ph 9462 4000.

Urgent medical problems are always seen on the same day.

For Home Visits, please telephone the surgery as early as possible after 8.15am.

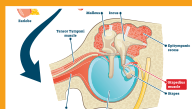
For After Hours emergency medical problems Monday-Saturday, please call 9298 8555 up until 11pm for the practice duty doctor.

# YOUR DOCTOR

MARCH 2021

FREE!

## This month we talk about...



**HOW TO HELP  
YOUR HEARING**



**LOW  
TESTOSTERONE**



**GET YOUR  
VITAMIN D**



**YOUR SKIN &  
SUGAR**

## All about anaemia

Every part of the human body relies on oxygen, which is carried in the blood by red blood cells. Anaemia is an umbrella term for a number of conditions where the blood is unable to carry enough oxygen to meet the full requirements of the body.

### Types of anaemia

There are lots of different types and causes of anaemia. Some of the most common types include:

- **Iron-deficiency anaemia (IDA)** is caused by a lack of iron. Without enough iron, we can become very unwell. IDA is the most common type of anaemia, and can be due to diet, blood loss, increased demand – such as in pregnancy, or reduced ability to absorb iron from the diet – for example, due to gastrointestinal problems. Women are more prone to IDA than men, particularly if they have heavy menstrual periods.
- **Sickle cell anaemia** is an inherited condition where the red blood cells are the wrong shape – they're 'sickle' shaped – like a crescent moon – instead of round. These cells have a shorter lifespan than normal red blood cells,

can't carry oxygen efficiently, and also reduce blood flow in general.

- **Pernicious anaemia** is due to low levels of Vitamin B12, which is essential for the production and function of red blood cells, so B12 deficiency is a form of anaemia. We become more prone to B12 deficiency as we age, or have some stomach or bowel problems.

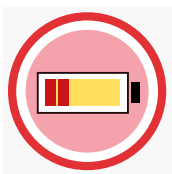
Anaemia can also occur in people with other diseases affecting the blood or bone marrow.

### Complications

Anaemia – and its causes – can be life-threatening. If someone has a sudden significant drop in the number of red cells in their blood, the most urgent cause to rule out is bleeding. Severe, untreated anaemia can cause serious heart problems. Shortness of breath and extreme fatigue can have a serious impact on everyday life and general health.

If you have symptoms of anaemia, it's important to see a doctor. Signs of anaemia can also be symptoms of other conditions, so an accurate diagnosis is essential for getting the right treatment.

## Common signs and symptoms of anaemia



**fatigue and  
weakness**



**palpitations –  
fast or irregular  
heartbeat**



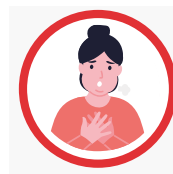
**headache and  
a feeling of  
pounding in  
the ears**



**feeling  
unusually  
cold**



**chest pain**



**shortness  
of breath**

# Tasty tuna salad

Summertime happiness and nutrition – all in one bowl! Serves 6-8

## INGREDIENTS

- 425g canned tuna in spring water, drained
- 120g salad leaves, (spinach & rocket work well)
- 1 large avocado, chopped
- 1 Lebanese cucumber, sliced
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 small red onion, peeled and thinly sliced
- 6-8 pitted black olives (whole or chopped)
- 1/4 cup parsley, finely chopped
- 3 hard-boiled eggs, quartered

## Dressing

- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp runny honey

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Flake tuna into small pieces.
2. In a glass jar, combine the dressing ingredients and shake well.
3. Combine tuna, salad leaves, avocado, cucumber, tomatoes, onion, olives and parsley in a large bowl.
4. Pour dressing over the salad. Toss gently, transfer to a serving bowl and add eggs.



# WORD SEARCH

E L V R H P L Z Q Z R Y G I S O Q W L M P D P Y Q  
 N E C R L P S V G W M G L H B R G O V H V I I L M  
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ANAEMIA  
 AUTOIMMUNE  
 BLOOD  
 COLLAGEN  
 DEFICIENCY  
 DEPRESSION  
 DIABETES  
 DIAGNOSIS  
 DISORDER  
 EARDRUMS

EARS  
 FATIGUE  
 GLYCATION  
 HEALTH  
 HEARING  
 HORMONE  
 HYPOGONADISM  
 KIDNEYS  
 LIBIDO  
 MENOPAUSE

OXYGEN  
 PUBERTY  
 RICKETS  
 SUGAR  
 SUNLIGHT  
 SYMPTOMS  
 TESTOSTERONE  
 TRAUMA  
 TREATMENT  
 VITAMIN

## Is sugar speeding up your wrinkles?

The link between sugar and signs of aging is well-documented, but not yet common knowledge. Sugar actually causes our skin to lose elasticity – the speed at which this happens depends partly on genetics, and partly on environmental factors. One environmental factor we have control over is our diet, and it's as easy – or difficult – as cutting out sugar.

### How does sugar cause wrinkles?

Collagen is a protein which acts as building blocks for the skin; a firm yet bouncy framework for our cells. As we age, the collagen loses its elasticity, and we begin to see our skin sag and wrinkle.

Sugars in our skin act on our collagen fibres; cross-linking them which effectively tangles them up and reduces their ability to heal and work normally. When we have spikes in our blood sugar, the process speeds up. This effect is called glycation; when sugar molecules attach themselves to proteins or fats in the body. Glycation is responsible for many of the complications of diabetes, but it can affect everyone to some degree.

### The bottom line

Changes to our skin are a natural part of aging, however the lifestyle choices we make can help to keep our skin firmer for longer – reducing our sugar intake is one of these.

Cutting out sugar can be hard as it triggers the same addiction impulses in our brains as any other addictive substance, but it is possible. You'll see the benefits in many aspects of your life – maintaining a healthy weight, reducing your risk of a number of diseases, and having healthy skin.

## Understanding low testosterone in men

Testosterone is the main male sex hormone. The changes that occur in boys at puberty – facial and body hair, deepening voice, growing more muscle and height, growth of the genitals, and sometimes mood and skin changes – are all down to testosterone.

Once hormone levels are more stable, testosterone continues to be responsible for the usual male characteristics, sex drive, and reproductive health. Low testosterone levels are referred to as 'hypogonadism'.

### What causes low levels of testosterone?

It's normal for hormone levels to fluctuate throughout the course of our lives, and testosterone levels naturally get lower as we age. There are some specific conditions which cause hormone levels to be out of the normal range. Low testosterone can be caused by a number of issues, including:

- injuries or infections that affect the testicles
- hormonal disorders or hormone treatment
- some forms of chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- some autoimmune diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

### Symptoms of low testosterone levels

The first physical changes that occur with low testosterone levels usually affect sexual function – a low libido (sex drive) and difficulty in getting or maintaining an erection are common early signs. More general signs can include fatigue, low mood, and poor concentration and memory.

### Do men experience menopause?

The hormonal changes that happen to men as they get older are usually more gradual than those that women experience – there's no obvious change like the menopause. As the word 'menopause' literally means that menstrual periods stop, there is no equivalent for men. However, men do experience significant changes as they age, which can affect their physical and mental health in similar ways to those experienced by women.

Make sure you see your doctor about any concerns or changes in your physical, sexual or mental health. Some of the general symptoms could indicate other conditions, so it's important to get a proper diagnosis.



Vitamin D is an essential micronutrient – one of its most important functions is to help grow and maintain strong bones and teeth. We produce vitamin D in our skin when we're exposed to sunlight, which is our main source.

Despite our sunny climate, vitamin D deficiency affects around 30% of Australians to some degree.

### What affects our vitamin D levels?

Generally people can get enough vitamin D from a small amount of sunlight – however this is dependent on a number of factors.

Vitamin D deficiency is more common in winter and places with little sunlight. People who are housebound or work indoors all day, and those who cover up all of their body, are also at risk. Skin colour is a factor as darker skin absorbs less sunlight than lighter skin. Also as you age, your skin's ability to produce vitamin D drops. Some diseases can also affect the body's absorption and production.

Some foods contain vitamin D, particularly oily fish, and dairy products, but people are generally unable to meet their recommended intake through diet alone.

### Symptoms of vitamin D deficiency

Vitamin D deficiency causes thinning of the bone structure – increasing the risk of falls and fractures in adults. People with vitamin D deficiency often suffer from bone, joint, and muscle pain or weakness. Vitamin D deficiency can also cause other symptoms, including:

- extreme fatigue
- depression
- thinning hair
- being prone to catching colds.

In children, extreme vitamin D deficiency can cause weakening and softening of the bones, which can lead to rickets. Leg bones begin to bend, causing bow-legs and serious problems with mobility and health.

### Can we have too much vitamin D?

It's nearly impossible to have too much naturally-occurring vitamin D. However, it is possible to get too much if you take a lot of vitamin D supplements. Excess vitamin D can cause kidney damage and dangerous heart issues. Always take only the recommended dose for your needs.

If you think you may have a vitamin D deficiency, consult your doctor. They will assess your risk factors and provide you with the correct treatment and advice.



Remember to take a balanced approach to sun exposure for vitamin D while minimising your risk of skin cancer. Your skin should never get burnt in the sun.

# How we can help our hearing

Hearing loss is common and affects around 1 in 6 people in Australia. Knowing how our hearing works; and what some common causes of hearing loss are, can help us to prevent or reduce it.

## How do we hear?

We hear when sound waves meet the eardrum and cause vibrations. These vibrations are passed on into the middle ear and inner ear where they cause movement of the three smallest bones in the body. Tiny hair-like cells pick up vibrations and transmit nerve impulses to the brain which translates as hearing. The whole process is continuous and instantaneous.

Taking care of our ears also means taking care of our general health. Any illnesses or injuries, (such as head and ear trauma), that affect the hearing should be assessed and treated by a doctor.

## Causes and prevention of hearing loss

The most important thing we can do to protect our hearing is to reduce our exposure to loud sounds. Loud noise can damage the hair cells so messages can't be transmitted to the brain as efficiently. Inner ear damage doesn't heal, so over time as more hair cells get damaged, your hearing will get worse.

Sound is measured in decibels (dB). Normal conversation is about 60dB. In general, sounds above 85dB are harmful, depending on how long and how often you're exposed to them. Noise above 120dB can cause immediate harm to your ears. As an example, listening to loud music through earbuds can reach 130dB.

## REPEAT SCRIPTS

Repeat prescriptions will not be issued without a prior consultation. Patients seeking repeat prescriptions must see their doctor. This is to ensure proper management.

## REFERRALS

A re-referral may be requested by phone. New referrals require that the patient be seen by the doctor. Referrals cannot be back-dated. Referrals are current for 12 months, please check with your specialist to see if your referral is still current.

## ETHICS

This practice abides by the AMA Code of Ethics at all times. A copy of the code is available on request.

## LONG CONSULTATIONS

Long consultations are available on request for all Doctors if required. **Dr F Kotai** requires 60 mins for an Aviation medical. All Health Assessments require 30 mins. Failure to attend appointments will attract a fee of \$30.00 for a standard consultation or \$50.00 for a long consultation.

## ONLINE APPOINTMENTS

Online appointments can be made any time of the day at [www.gfmc.com.au](http://www.gfmc.com.au) click on "Make a booking?"

## BILLING

**We are a private practice and payment is made on the day.** A discount of \$5.00 is given for payment on the day. We can claim your rebate immediately from Medicare using Easyclaim onto your cheque or savings card or Online Claiming where Medicare deposits direct to your bank account within 48 hrs. Questions related to fees can be dealt with by the receptionist. If you have difficulty paying your account, please feel free to discuss this matter with your doctor.

## FEEDBACK

We would like to know of any concerns you may have about the care you receive.

Please feel free to talk to the doctor or our Practice Manager. However, if you feel there is a matter you wish to take up outside, you can contact the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO): GPO Box B61, Perth WA 6838. Tel: 9323 0600.

## PHONE CALLS

Doctors in this practice may be contacted by phone during surgery hours. A message will be taken if the doctor is with another patient.

## MISSED APPOINTMENTS

If you miss an appointment and fail to advise us at least 2 hours beforehand you will be charged a Failure to Attend Fee. This fee applies to everyone and cannot be claimed back at Medicare.

Your medical record is a confidential document. It is the policy of this practice to maintain security of personal health information at all times and to ensure that this information is only available to authorised members of staff.

## HEARING LOSS MYTHS

Sorting out the fact from the fiction can help us keep our hearing healthy.

### MYTH 1: HEARING LOSS IS INEVITABLE

Our hearing does naturally worsen as we age, but protecting it early on could reduce our risk of hearing problems later in life.

### MYTH 2: HEARING LOSS IS ONLY A PROBLEM FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Younger people experience hearing problems for many reasons, such as congenital deafness, infections, and unhealthy levels of sound exposure.

### MYTH 3: HEARING LOSS DOESN'T AFFECT GENERAL HEALTH

Hearing loss can affect many aspects of a person's life, including their ability to work and learn. They can feel self-conscious and isolated, which can affect mental and physical health.

## Discuss your concerns with the doctor

It's a good idea to think about what you'd like to discuss before your visit. This form can help you organise your thoughts. After you make an appointment, take a minute to write down the doctor's name and appointment details. Then use this form to make a list of your concerns.

DOCTOR'S NAME	DATE	TIME

1.

2.

3.

NOTES:

**Disclaimer:** The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only, and is not intended as a substitute for sound health care advice. We are not liable for any adverse effects or consequences resulting from the use of any information, suggestions, or procedures presented. Always consult a qualified health care professional in all matters pertaining to your physical, emotional and mental health.

*Our newsletter is free! Take a copy with you.*